



By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Heb. 11:1

They looked for a City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:10

Many are called, but few are chosen. Matt. 22:14

This day whom ye will serve. Luke 16:13

This Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 13:48

The City had no head of the Sun neither of the Moon. For the glory of God did lighten it. Rev. 21:3

While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. Matt. 25:5

At midnight there was a cry made. Behold the bridegroom cometh. Matt. 25:6

I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Mal. 4:5

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Mark 1:14

Re that Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things. Rev. 21:7

The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

The Mosaic Law

LIFE'S DESTINATIONS

VITA! VITA! VITA!

THE WEDGE

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

WHEN ZION BECKONS

Vol. 43, No. 10

May 19, 1956

The Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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L. G.

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St. Joseph, Mo.

J. G. O.

"None to Compete"

Dear Sirs:

Your teachings regarding our Lord's doctrines are clear as well as providing perfect understanding. There are none to compete at all.

May God strengthen us until we overcome the scouts of Satan.

Tarkwa, Gold Coast, Africa.

J. A. M.

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Dear Thomas:

Your letter was most welcome. Yes, we are fortunate boys that we know how to obey the Bible. If we do as the Bible tells us, we will be soldiers of God. We wish we could visit you at Rochester. We will pray hard to be able to go. I'm eleven years old. How old are you? The verse you are referring to is 1 Tim. 4:12—Right?

Edgar, Wis.

Q. R.

MESSAGE Enriches Faith

Dear Megiddo Friends:

I enclose cost for another year of the good old paper. The more I read it, the richer I grow in Faith of His Word. We know His Word shall stand forever. Wish you all God's blessings for the Mission.

Montreal, Quebec

Mrs. M. H.

The Mosaic Law

Why are we not subject to it today?

The Mosaic Law, especially that portion of the Law known as the Ten Commandments, holds a place of prominence in all Christian creeds today. But is that place of prominence deserved? To answer this question, we must look into the past to learn: To whom was the Mosaic Law given? Why was it given? What were its limitations?

Introduction of Divine Law

IN THE prehistoric millenniums of the past, numerous species of man lived and died upon our earth. Little did they leave behind them save a few bones and crude implements. With the passage of the centuries, there came an expansion of mental caliber, a gradual enlarging of the powers of reason and intellect. The time came when man was no longer content simply

"to breathe, and wake, and sleep,
to smile, to sigh, to grieve,
to move in idleness through earth."

When he began to seek after the meaning of life, when his aspirations began to reach out after that which lay beyond the limits of the present, the time had come for the revelation of Divine purpose. In that far-off early morning, at the very daybreak of civilization, God made man acquainted with Divine Law, the beautiful, unchanging, eternal principles of Truth and Righteousness. He gave to man a lofty and unparalleled standard of moral conduct by which he might become so perfect that the limits of mortality would be powerless to confine him, so transformed, so pure, and holy as to belong to Eternity.

This law which was present at the dawn of the day of salvation is known as the Everlasting Covenant (Heb. 13:20). It offers Jehovah's protection and blessing, conditioned upon man's loyalty to Him. It is styled "everlasting" because it is perpetual law offering perpetual reward: its terms may be accepted at any time during salvation's day, and its benefits are eternal.

When Adam and Eve first entered the garden of the Lord, this law was present.

"And the Lord God commanded . . . saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17).

God's Law has ever demanded moral goodness with no admixture of evil.

In time, many others entered the garden of the Lord, and, in consideration of the benefits to be derived, voluntarily placed their lives under the jurisdiction of Divine Law. Among them were some fine old characters: There was Enoch, who "walked with God" (Gen. 5:24); who "had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5); and Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (II Pet. 2:5). "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9).

Then came Abraham, loftiest of the Patriarchs.

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1).

It is plain to be seen that the Everlasting Covenant demands perfection of character, purity of heart.

The Mosaic Law

At the time Jacob with his sons and their families followed Joseph into Egypt to secure sustenance during the long famine, they numbered 70 souls.

For many years they remained in Egypt, living in the land of Goshen and multiplying exceedingly until at length the period of time of which God had prophesied to Abraham had passed:

"Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions" (Gen. 15:13, 14, R.S.V.).

God chose Moses to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Wilderness to Canaan. At the very onset the need was manifest for a system of rules and regulations by which to control this vast horde of people. In Egypt they had lived as a race of slaves, under the direction of their overseers; but upon leaving Egypt, they passed out from under Egyptian supervision and Egyptian law, as well. Whereupon they were faced with all the problems of government.

Upon emerging from Egyptian servitude, the Children of Israel were largely an illiterate and barbaric race which must be civilized; for, as the people through whom God was working, they must be an example to the surrounding nations. Law must be applied to their lives until in administration, in morals, in cleanliness, in order, they would be recognized as superior. It must necessarily be a stern law, requiring rigid observance, with severely imposed penalties for the transgressors.

Thus it was under Divine guidance that what is now known as the Mosaic Law came into being. While time has woven a halo of sanctity about it, the Mosaic Law was first and last a national law, supplied to meet the practical, everyday needs of the Israelitish nation. It was a simplified code that would shape crude and illiterate people into the citizens from which holy men and women could be made; for one cannot attain to God's standard of holiness until he is civil. This was civil law to civilize.

That Law which angels dictated to Moses contained

not only many regulations which had to do with the maintenance of peace and order, of health, cleanliness, and morality, laws to punish the guilty and protect the innocent, but it also had another highly important feature: a ritual of sacrifice and altar, priesthood and tabernacle.

This Law made extensive use of symbol, type, and shadow. God accommodated to the temper and circumstances of that people a method of teaching best fitted to their capacity for understanding. What wisdom there is in all His ways!

Why did God see fit to select from the wide range of humanity this people, the descendants of Abraham through the line of Isaac and Jacob, and to make them for nearly 2,000 years the custodians of His Truth?

God foresaw, threading down through years to come, a people here who would do His will. This is why the Jewish race—as a populace oftentimes grossly unworthy—enjoyed God's favor, were reared beneath His discipline, and educated in His Truth, which was kept perpetually before them in the significant rituals which became a part of the law that governed them as a nation.

Thus for a long period of time did God's blessings overflow to an entire race, while from generation to generation angels added to the Book of Life the names of the worthy, the faithful few, who, building upon the principles of the doctrine of the Truth which was their heritage, would, as Paul expressed it, "*go on unto perfection*" (Heb. 6:1). While the Mosaic Law governed the nation as a whole, they, the remnant, chose to enter into the Everlasting Covenant, conforming their lives to its more exacting demands, and, like their faithful forebears, walk before God and become perfect.

Contrasts Between the Everlasting Covenant and the Mosaic Law

Under the Mosaic Law one could, without condemnation, indulge in low and vile thinking; or he could give his pride and vanity free rein; he might meditate bitterness, or allow his soul to be filled with envy, provided he inflicted no injury upon his neighbor.

But deeper, deeper, deeper, probing to the very thoughts and intents of the heart, is the "royal law" (James 2:8), which has for its reward eternal life.*

Jesus said:

"Do not for a moment suppose that I have come to annul the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to annul them but to give them their completion. In truth I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter, not a particle shall pass away from the Law until all has taken place. Whoever therefore breaks one of the smallest of these commandments and teaches others to do so, will be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven; but whoever practices them and teaches them, will be acknowledged as great in the Kingdom of heaven. For I assure you that unless your righteousness greatly surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will certainly not find entrance into the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-20, Weymouth).

Then Jesus further illustrates His point by drawing a comparison between God's great eternal Truth, which

* The Everlasting Covenant was from the beginning of man's probation; and not until centuries afterward was the Mosaic Law, with its ten commandments, added to the law of faith.

He faithfully preached, and two of the treasured Ten Commandments:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. . . . Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:21, 22, 27, 28).

It is one thing to be a decent citizen; it is another thing to *purify the heart*. It is one thing to live in accord with the law of the land, and another thing to keep the Everlasting Covenant. One yields temporal benefits; the other yields eternal benefits.

One marvels at the patience of the Apostle Paul, as he, like the Master, over and over again sought to impress the insensible Jews with this truth, bringing to bear every argument he could command:

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:19).

"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13).

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? . . . For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (II Cor. 3:7, 8, 11).

The Mosaic Law with its death penalty, which served to hold transgression in check, was indeed glorious in its inception as a civil law; yet how much more glorious is the Everlasting Covenant which remains!

Paul says again:

"Before the coming of faith we were all imprisoned under the power of the Law, with our only hope of deliverance the faith that was to be shown to us. Or, to change the metaphor, the Law was like a strict governess in charge of us until we went to the school of Christ and learned to be justified by faith in Him. . . . You must realize that so long as an heir is a child, though he is destined to be master of everything, he is, in practice, no different from a servant. He has to obey a guardian or trustee until the time which his father has chosen for him to receive his inheritance. So it is with us: while we were 'children' we lived under the authority of basic moral principles" (Gal. 3:22, 24; 4:1-3, Phillips).

Here Paul compares the Mosaic Law to a strict governess instructing in the Higher Law, bringing men and women into a knowledge of the Truth.

"The Law and the Prophets were until John—"

"Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).

With the advent of Christ, the Mosaic Law became worthless altogether: unprofitable as a teacher—displaced in part by the Prophets, and now wholly by the more vivid and forceful preaching of Christ—and useless as a national law, seeing that Israel was no longer a nation, but a state, subject to all the laws of Rome.

But the Jews were insensible to the progressive ways

of the Almighty. For many centuries they had relied on the Mosaic Law. It had become to them a way of life, fixed and unchangeable. They had hated and persecuted the Prophets; and, when Jesus came as their Messiah, preaching the Kingdom of God, they likewise rejected Him.

They clung stubbornly to the old dead letter of the law. The nation was growing old and worthless along with the Law. No longer were its people fit custodians of God's Truth; no longer could the Almighty find material from among their numbers for the Kingdom of God. So God deserted them to their devices, and turned to the Gentiles. But not without warning the Jewish nation.

Of the calamities that were to befall them for their stubbornness, the Prophets had long ago warned. It was with tears and strong pleading that Jesus addressed them:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 37, 38).

But despite the stern warning of the Prophets, the pleadings of the Master, and the untiring reasoning of the Apostle Paul, the Jews would not move forward with the plan of God; so the plan of God moved forward without them. And from the shoulders of humankind God lifted the burden of the Mosaic Law—for a burden it had now become, since the purpose for which it had been designed had been fulfilled.

Of God's method of instructing His people under the new system, Paul says:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11—13).

The old Mosaic Law was not only worn out and ineffectual; it was displaced, by authority of the highest order. But there are still in this world today stubborn minds who refuse to admit it.

Of What Value is the Mosaic Law to Us?

Paul speaks of that Law as

"... having a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10: 1).

Here lies its value today. Those ancient types and shadows form a part of the background of our faith, as we enter into and endeavor to keep the Everlasting Covenant. It becomes with us, not a matter of keeping again those ancient forms and ceremonies, but of drinking in the deep and beautiful lessons underlying the observances.

In the various specified sacrifices, in the Sabbath observance, in the brazen serpent that was erected upon a pole in the Wilderness, and the bells on the High Priest's garment, and many another type and shadow, are great eternal Truths. It is with these deep lessons of Truth that we shall concern ourselves in future articles in this series.

Life's Destinations

The Danger of Drift

IF LIFE'S OBJECTIVE is "getting from where we are to where we want to be," then our destinations in life assume great importance. *Where it is we want to go, what it is we want to be, and how much we want to accomplish*, become matters of personal and major concern. We know that "he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" is a well-established principle.

Regardless of how much effort we put into living, all our life, the results will be very disappointing unless the activity is directed toward an approved objective, and, in our case, one that is acceptable to God, namely, a new creature; and it is the spirit with which we make the effort that will determine the result.

There are many forbidden cities in life which lure us by their promise of wealth and pleasure. They make their appeal by means of false pretenses which tempt us to seek our satisfaction in ways that are foreign to our spiritual upbuilding, and disapproved by the family of God of which we are a part. We are living in a pleasure-loving age when the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things can enter in and we lose sight of our goal, and start to drift.

Drifting, aimless living, is a great deterrent to success in any undertaking. It is as serious for one to have no worthwhile destination toward which he directs his efforts, as it is to have an unworthy one. A man possessed of great wisdom, who also fell into the pernicious habit of drifting, had this to say about destination: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Many people are in trouble today because they have tried to escape the responsibility of doing something worthwhile with their lives. They put their minds into neutral and let the passing circumstances push them around. They avoid decisions and they side-step commitments. They drift rather than march, and it is not surprising that they get caught in the cross currents of life and break up. We know that human drift freed from divine law is downward.

Others never get from where they are to where they want to be in life because they spend all their time thinking about it and none of their time working on it. Life has no short cuts. There are no easy, effortless ways to worthwhile and lasting rewards; and we know that lack of interest means lack of concentration, without which

little can be accomplished. When we get something for nothing we cannot appreciate its value. There is a compulsion connected with life's destinations which no one can avoid. Even Jesus was bound by this fact of life.

"Compelling is that small word, 'must,'
It leaves no room to hedge:
Enjoins a man to fight straight through,
Not tarry 'round the edge.
And surely, if the cause be just,
Man should be quick to say, 'I must.'"

Jesus recognized the reality of the word "must," and He accepted its demands upon His life. When He had something to do He did it. He never fussed, nor delayed, nor made excuses. Jesus used a procedure which is always helpful, when He publicly acknowledged that He was under compulsion. Often He said, "I must," and that very resolve helped Him to endure whatever the compulsion might be.

When Jesus had fixed His destination on Jerusalem, He knew He had to go through Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans were in a family feud: they had no dealings with one another. They would not extend to each other the common courtesies of life, and made it hard to get along together. The disciples knew that Jesus faced a hard journey. He would even be refused a drink of water on the way; such were the lengths to which the Jews and Samaritans carried their animosities. His disciples did not think the goal was worth the cost; but Jesus did. He did not assume a drifting or indecisive attitude because of the danger involved. Samaria was a "must" for Him: there was no alternate route.

Whatever your Samaria may be, you can be advised no more wisely than to deal with it as Jesus did. Accept it as a "must," endure it as a means; improve it where you can, use it for the best. Do not drift.

Thomas, whose reputation for raising questions was well known, once asked Jesus to tell them how they could know the way which would take them from where they were to where they wanted to be. His answer was practical. He said in effect, "Look at me: my life lived day by day will show you the way." When His followers, practical people that they were, thought about this statement, certain very definite facts appeared regarding the way one must take to get from where you are to where you want to be. The probability or possibility of drifting into this blissful condition was entirely omitted. They were convinced that there was a way to do it, a way available to them and to all people like them.

Human nature will always be confronted with the lure of comfort which bids the people of this century, like the early Hebrews, to pitch their tents and make their camp before they reach the promised land. Without a definite purpose they can never arrive; they have no fixed goal, and like the man in the parable of Luke 12, take their ease, eat, drink and be merry.

We think of something better for ourselves, but in fact we desire our present situation more; and we never start on the journey toward the realization of that better thing. We live in our ivory towers of self-satisfaction, fairly well pleased with ourselves and the little world we have created. Thus we drift along, like a tramp steamer going from port to port, wherever some small or passing benefit seems in prospect, with no set course and no ultimate haven. If we really want to avoid the habit of

drift, we make a good beginning when we start out with the prayer, "This day let me be on the march toward something." A prayer for God's guidance gives every day a good start. We must trust God for what He has promised.

It is your responsibility to accept God for what He is on the basis of His promises, and then to trust Him all the time, all the way. Don't try to make a deal with God in saying that you will follow Him if He grants certain of your desires. God never responds to such persuasion. Of course you will be honest enough with yourself to realize that life guarantees no course of action or set of circumstances. A commitment to serve God does not mean that all will work out for you as you desire; but if fulfilling your part of the agreement, all things will work out for your spiritual good. How infinitely better is this attitude than a cowardly, hesitant, tentative approach to life.

It was said of a certain great man of the world that he actually believed two and two equals four, but he felt a gentleman should not press the point. *Christian* gentlemen know that true religion is constructed upon principles as unchangeable as the science of numbers. As certain as two plus two equals four, just so certain will the holy life added to sound doctrinal belief total arrival in the Kingdom of God. And they will "press the point" their whole life through, until life's grandest destination is achieved and they stand approved in the Kingdom of the Messiah.

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.
The issue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.

1956 EDITION

God's Spiritual Creation

The pages of this booklet unfold the significance of the Creation Allegory of the first three chapters of Genesis. These chapters, taken literally, have long been a stumbling block to the clergy, a puzzle to the laity, and an object of scorn and ridicule to the scientist and critic. This booklet shows that instead of relating the work of the natural creation these chapters outline the moral development and ultimate salvation of the true Church.

This work is the result of years of study by the Rev. L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Mission, and the whole is based on his discourses on Genesis which comprised 48 lectures.

80 pages, size 6 by 9 inches.

Price each 20 cents postpaid.

Vita! Vita! Vita!

LIFE! LIFE! LIFE!

IN THE glowing account of the matchless faith of the cloud of witnesses" we have this report:

"Through their faith these men conquered kingdoms, ruled in justice and proved the truth of God's promises. . . . From being weaklings they became strong men and mighty warriors; they routed whole armies of foreigners. . . . Others were exposed to the test of public mockery and flogging, and to the torture of being left bound in prison. They were killed by stoning, by being sawn in two. . . . Many became refugees with nothing but sheepskins or goatskins to cover them. They lost everything and yet were spurned and ill-treated by a world that was too evil to see their worth. They lived as vagrants in the desert, on the mountains, or in caves or holes in the ground. All these won a glowing testimony to their faith" (Heb. 11: 33-39, Phillips' translation).

To those of us living far down in the cool shadows of the Day of Salvation, it seems the extreme cruelty borne by those worthies of old living in the scorching heat of Salvation's Day would be almost unbearable, and we wonder how many of us would leave behind such a faithful and glorious record. We possess the knowledge of the same truth that was their strength and stay. But what gave them the quenchless zeal to endure joyfully many times in the face of violent death? What, by comparison, could—now in this cold, indifferent age—cause us ever to grow fainthearted and murmur at our lot? Shame upon us that we do falter at times, while this courageous cloud of witnesses held to their faith so unwaveringly!

Jesus prophesied of the tribulations that the early Christians were to suffer for His name: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2: 10). *A crown of life!* Was that promise the secret of their power to endure faithfully? If so, let us make use of that same promise, that its glorious hope may stimulate us to action—for zealous action is no less necessary to resist the apathetic indifference of today than the fiery persecution of that age.

In that dark and dreadful epoch when the great Roman power was practicing and prospering, wearing out the saints, casting the truth to the ground, it is said that those faithful martyrs confined in dark prison cells refused to relinquish their radiant hope till their latest breath, and wrote on their confining walls, *Vita, Vita, Vita!* meaning Life, Life, Life! They refused to let themselves forget that beyond the vale of their present suffering and denial there is a life that will recompense them far, far beyond the price paid in this short, mortal career.

Even in the dungeon those early Christians kept their faith strong and their hope undimmed by not allowing the prize of life eternal to fade from their eyes. It was the joy set before them that enabled them to pass through the fiery trials which were their daily portion. Prison walls could not shut out their view of the Promised Land. Chains could bind the body but not the soul made

free by the truth of Almighty God. Though literally prisoners of a dark and cruel system, in heart and mind they were "prisoners of hope"—hope of the reward that God will give to those who patiently endure to the end.

We, living in the cool of the day, are not called upon to suffer the galling bondage of the literal prison, but have we not many times felt the stifling confinement created by the chains of sin? The power of sin seems so strong and the desire to do good seems so weak, and we stumble and falter in dismay. Why is it we find ourselves in such a state? The answer is this: We fail to keep written on our minds the soul-quickenings words, *Vita, Vita, Vita!* The hope of life forevermore fades; the present looms large and real, and we give up to the powerful master—our own desires.

Again, at times, the bands of circumstances hem us in and we seek in vain for a means to "escape" to a place where we think we could better serve God. But we must remember that all things shall work for our good if we love God. Remember, that which seemingly thwarts and holds us back is a means for greater development of patience and meekness and all of the godly virtues necessary to obtain Life, Life, Life! Before us looms a larger door of self-sacrifice, dark and forbidding; we stand before the knob with fear and trembling, which, if we will but arise and open, will lead to a larger and higher plane of peace than we yet have known! These present circumstances are our training or schooling for that life beyond the present turmoil, if we will only be exercised by them.

Perhaps the darkest, deepest dungeon into which we find ourselves plunged during our struggle for freedom is some particular besetment or besetments that seem to bind us in spite of our many efforts to free ourselves from them. We plunge deeper into the mire as we shamefully yield to the desire of the flesh which seems to say, "Thus far you may go and no farther." It may be impatience, foolishness, reading that which is not upbuilding, or paralyzing indifference and slackness in upholding the high standard of truth. We lose sight of the prize, our feet slip and, alas! we find ourselves in the bottomless pit of our own making. It is then that we must take action and fight for our lives, for the battle with sin can be successfully fought and won. The Captain of our salvation endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him; and we, too, are well able.

If we desire to succeed and stand vivified with immortality in the Kingdom of God, let us cease building up the bars of discouragement, defeat and despair. Rather, let us do as did those early Christians: write upon all our confining walls, "Life, Life, Life." *It can be ours!* No more sad lamenting, *The work can't be done.* We shall find to our glad surprise that which held us back in the past melting away, and in its place we shall see the vision of that freedom for which we long growing ever more real. And it seems we can behold ourselves surrounded by our friends who with us have struggled for Life, standing on the evergreen shore of the unmeasurable ocean of Eternity as it rolls in majestic splendor,

each mighty wave revealing a greater pleasure, each wave a cycle of ages in which we may enjoy the fruit of our labor. As we stand there we ask ourselves, "Was anything too much to sacrifice, even the fondest desire of our heart, for such boundless happiness as this?"

This is Life as God, from the beginning of all things, has planned it to be—Life free from sorrow, pain, and care. There we shall enjoy freedom from death, a glorious liberty of the sons of God Almighty. There in God's world of tomorrow we shall imbibe of the wisdom of the grander worlds in neighboring universes.

As we freely mingle with the angelic hosts, listening to them relate their experiences during the countless ages past and gone, and witness and join in one thrilling jubilee after another, we shall experience the delightful realization that we are beginning to comprehend the true meaning of *Vita, Vita, Vita—LIFE FOREVERMORE!*

THE WEDGE

THERE is a fable of the devil's auction, in which he purposed to dispose of all his tools and gadgets except the wedge. When asked why he should want to keep the wedge and part with all the rest of his devices, he replied he had come to the conclusion that a wedge was the only tool he needed in his business. Once an intrusion was made, time and circumstances usually did the rest. None of the other tools could prove effective without first using the wedge.

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Men and women who have struggled against the evils of their nature are keenly aware of the stubborn and painful fact which this bit of fiction contains:

Allow evil the hair-line of an entrance into your life and the damage is done—the wedge is driven. The devil (wicked desires) will hammer and hammer, blow upon blow, until your allegiance to God is severed, your loyalty divided.

The moral is: **RESIST THE FIRST, TINIEST IMPULSE TO SIN.**

"Your thoughts are the molds which will shape all your life;
As one thinks in his heart, so is he;
And sin's entering wedge is a thought harbored close
From which Jesus would want you to flee."

We find upon close scrutiny that every evil deed we perpetrate begins with an evil thought. Once the evil thought is granted lodgment its demands become more and more insistent, until finally it is expressed outwardly in an evil deed or by an unseemly word.

The evil thought captivates and jeopardizes only as it finds a welcome in the mind. Sin consists in yielding to the evil thought, as an evil thought does not cause us to sin unless it is welcomed and tolerated. So long as the evil thought finds no sympathy within, the wedge proves useless, the mind remains unharmed, no matter how long and severe the blows may prove to be. The wedge's sharp edge is always sure to find the weakest spot in our character.

Each time we resist the entering wedge of unbelief,

our resistance to its workings becomes stronger, and we become more firmly established, rooted and grounded in the cause of Truth.

Our peace and contentment will be found to increase and flourish each time we resist the entrance of the unthankful spirit. With each evil desire crushed, with each wicked thought repelled, with each impure motive effaced, our growth in divine life will become rapidly apparent.

Daniel's method of resisting the intrusion of sin's wedge is on record for us: "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (1:8). Nothing is so effective against the "wiles of the devil" as a steadfast heart-purpose. It is the mightiest sentry over internal and external conduct. It is always the purposeless life that is found to lack defense against sin.

How steadfast must one's heart-purpose be in order to resist the Devil's wedge? Each servant of Jehovah declares, "I have set my face [heart] like a *flint*." Against such fixation of purpose, such flint-like determination, the Devil's wedge is powerless as straw.

The Apostle Paul also had the mighty safeguard of a purpose true, and, like Daniel, every time a hostile circumstance beset him he held firmly to his purpose. The words found recorded in Rom. 8:38, 39 divulge the sovereign ambition that sat enthroned in his life: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If we cultivate the companionship of a glorious purpose, we shall be found glorifying Truth in every issue of life. We shall be found doing nothing that will impair our fitness as a servant of the Living God. Our mind will cherish no suggestion which will make it a less holy dwelling for the spiritual Christ, the Truth. Neither will it be found allowing any emotion or yearning to enter which would prove to be an affront to God and righteousness.

"A child of God's love never suffers defeat
In the conflicts of life's pilgrim way.
You may victory gain if you guard well your thoughts,
Have you thought upon 'these things' today?
The things that are honest, the things that are pure,
And the truth that no earth cloud can dim;
As He looks on your heart with His soul-searching gaze,
Does He find it well pleasing to Him?"

"Search me, O my God, and thus know all my thoughts!
And by truth, which hath always sufficed
For my soul's deepest needs, bring each wandering thought
In captivity unto the Christ.
And when at the Judgment, life's book is unclosed,
May no pages be marred by sin's blots,
Because, though the tempter hath fiercely assailed,
I have honored Thee, Lord, in my thoughts!"

FAITH reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and "No,"
She sees the best that glimmers through the worst,
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer through the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wailed "Mirage!"

Musings of the Editor

WHILE there are no accurate figures, it is estimated roughly that one hundred million dollars is the annual loss of termite damage in the U. S. A. Throughout the United States, termites cause serious damage to the foundations and woodwork of buildings, to articles in buildings, and to living trees, crops, and other vegetation.

The Smithsonian Museum at Washington, D. C., has a collection of some 2,000 species of termites. **Termites** Ninety-five per cent of the world termite damage is done by the subterranean type. They work in the dark and under the surface, and the damage they are causing is unnoticed outwardly unless a close examination is made. As a result, old buildings, and sometimes comparatively new structures, collapse because weakened by these pests.

The sins of the human heart are distinctly comparable to the termites. Sin is deceitful; it works under cover; it is most destructive. And like the literal termites, sin's work often goes on unnoticed until it is too late to rectify the damage done.

It might be a most revealing and profitable experience for one to take thought and actually itemize the different types of termites that plague his soul. The results attained may be staggering.

The termites of the soul may be listed under such basic categories as Jesus enumerated in the thirteen evils (Mark 7: 21, 22). Whether it be evil thoughts, the first, or foolishness, the last, sin manifests itself in numerous ways. Its destructive force may not be felt or noticed immediately, but eventually its work must be faced. Either we must exterminate these evils or they will continue their destructiveness to our ruin.

Biologists recommend methods by which the destructiveness of termites can be controlled. God also provides means by which we may eradicate the termites of the soul. His Word, the thorough furnisher, is the weapon. By it we can resist all spiritual termites from within as well as without, and when examined by the Judge may be found sound, and perfect, with never a defect.

OBITUARIES

FLORA A. SLITER

That "this world is the land of the dying" has been rightly observed, for another of our members has been gathered to rest.

Flora A. Sliter of Adams, N. Y., succumbed, after a long and agonizing illness, to the Silent Reaper on May 2, 1956. She is survived by her husband, a son and a daughter, two brothers, and several grandchildren.

For nearly twenty years Sister Sliter had been a regular and frequent visitor at our Rochester headquarters, having become interested in the work of the Megiddo Mission Church in 1933. She was ever ready to lend a helping hand whenever she could, and found great joy in sowing the seed of the Kingdom whenever and wherever she found a listening ear.

We shall miss her. And to those who mourn her loss we offer the consolation of the Scriptures that God's to-

morrow will be a day without a cloud, where sickness and Death shall be no more.

Funeral services were conducted at the Piddock Funeral Home, Adams, N. Y., by Rev. P. J. Thatcher.

NELLIE FRANCISCO

A letter from Wayland, Mich., signed Carl Francisco, brought the sad news of the death of his mother, Nellie Francisco in March, 1956.

This reader was one of long standing, and who sent in many names in an effort to spread the glad news of the Kingdom.

FURNACE AND HAMMER

Pain's furnace-heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow;
And all my heart in anguish shivers
And trembles at the fiery glow;
And yet I whisper—"As God will!"
And in His hottest fire stand still.

He comes, and lays my heart, all heated,
On the hard anvil, minded so
Into His own fair shape to beat it
With His great hammer, blow on blow;
And yet I whisper—"As God will!"
And at His heaviest blows hold still.

He takes my softened heart and beats it;
The sparks fly off at every blow;
He turns it o'er and o'er and heats it,
And lets it cool, and makes it glow;
And yet I whisper—"As God will!"
And in His mighty hand hold still.

Why should I murmur? for the sorrow
Thus only longer-lived would be;
Its end may come, and will tomorrow,
When God has done His work in me;
So I say trusting—"As God will!"
And trusting to the end, hold still.

—Selected.

Gems of Thought

Prepare for the future; do not brood over it.

When we choose the beginning of a road, let us remember that we choose its end also.

Faith is like a great spoon that will take the sorrows, disappointments, joys and hopes, and blend them into a perfect whole, a cake fully baked.

The injuries of life, if rightly improved, will be to us as the strokes of the statuary on his marble, forming us to a more beautiful shape, and making us fitter to adorn the heavenly temple.

When God is "working in us to will," we must set our faces like a flint to carry out this will, and respond with an emphatic "I will" to every "Thou shalt" of His. For God can only carry out His own will with us as we consent to it, and will in harmony with His will.

Meditations

On the Word

"And Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (II Samuel 6: 6, 7).

The foregoing is an excerpt from the account of David's bringing of the ark of God from the house of Abinadab in Gibeah, where it had rested for many years, to the place David had prepared for it in Jerusalem. It was now about the tenth year of David's reign. The kingdom of Israel was firmly established in his hand. Jerusalem being the seat, both of secular and religious authority, it was the logical place for the ark of God to be permanently located.

A company of thirty thousand chosen men, headed by King David, formed the guard of honor to convey the ark to its resting place in the newly erected tent in Jerusalem. The ark was placed upon a new cart drawn by oxen. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were in charge of the driving. At the threshing-floor of Nachon the tragedy described in our text occurred.

Some students of Scripture have thought that the report of this incident placed God in an unfavorable light, that He punished excessively and cruelly what was done in the right spirit with the intention of being helpful. They felt they had to apologize for the action and find some way to explain it away. But we cannot admit that God ever would do anything harsh or unjust. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne: mercy and truth shall go before His face (Ps. 89: 14). Justice, mercy, and truth, form a golden chain about His throne that nothing can sever.

We see in this incident a graphic illustration of the absoluteness of God's commands. A law once enacted holds good, no matter how many years may intervene unless it is specifically nullified. Five hundred years before, the edict had been issued that they should not touch any holy thing, lest they die. Moses was specifically commanded to make "staves" or handles for the ark, and Aaron's sons were to handle it only by these staves. God could not change on this demand or its penalty and still be an unchangeable God.

Too often in the handling of holy things we, like Uzzah, make the mistake of assuming that we must be a prop for God. We are inclined to feel that He needs us, that He cannot get along without us. However the truth is just the other way around. God is our stay, enduring throughout all changes. It is He who steadies us when we are in danger of falling. As a religious sage once said: "If you think you see the ark of the Lord tottering, you can be quite sure it is due to a swimming in your own head." We are dependent upon God, not God upon us.

Uzzah provided a lesson for future generations that they may realize God needs not the help of man. He should have known this. With him it was largely a case

of absent-mindedness, or "rashness" (II Sam. 6: 6, margin). But God does not condone inattentiveness to even His smallest command.

God's spokesmen are His spokesmen, but nothing more. We may be the instruments upon which He plays His music, the anvil upon which He hammers out the shape of the material for His future Kingdom. We are the earthen vessels lifted up to hold His heavenly treasure. And this means that we are "stewards of the manifold grace of God," stewards of His "mystery" or "secret truths," and not the providers of it. We are called out to be workers together with God, not in the sense of doing what God cannot do without us, but rather in the sense of doing with God what we cannot do without Him.

Many people today believe that God is asleep or dead because of His long silence and absence of any visible judgments, and because of this, because "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8: 11). But if, as in the time of Uzzah, disobedience were associated with swift retribution, man's consciousness of God's presence would be sharpened, and his fear of doing wrong heightened.

Many people, professing to believe the Bible, are reluctant to accept the Scriptural viewpoint that good works are essential to salvation. Quote to them Jesus' words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48), and they will answer, "It is impossible for any man or woman to become perfect. If God demands such a high standard of Christian living as that, there will not be a 'corporal's guard' saved." And fearing the ark of God will topple due to an unfavorable reaction, they try to steady it by assuring the enquirer that if he does the best he can, and looks to Jesus as his personal Saviour, he has done all that it is possible for him to do for himself, and everything will work out well in the end.

King Saul thought he was helping the Lord when after the battle with the Amalekites—and at the insistence of the thrifty Israelites—he spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord his God, although he had been commanded to slay them utterly. Samuel reproved him by saying: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? . . . Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (I Sam. 15: 23). His "putting his hand to the ark" cost him his kingdom and, because he did not overcome it, ultimately will cost him his eternal life.

And the tendency to want to put a hand out to stay the ark of the Lord when the traveling gets rough, is still with us. If not alert we may do the same thing today. Oftentimes reverses are blessings in disguise, financial losses, the loss of health or the loss of a good position, or the loss of a member of the family taken by death. But immediately someone will say, "This trial may shake that person's faith foundation"; and up goes their hand to stay the ark, and they ask: "Why did the Lord allow this to happen?" Let us keep our hand away from the ark. God is wise enough to handle His own affairs. The ark is not going to topple because there are a few rough places in the road. If we keep our own hearts right we need not fear that any true child of God will lose his equilibrium because of trials or reverses that may come.

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT



Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. **THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Is the use of wine permissible?

The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy (I Tim. 5:23), "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

Notice, only a *little wine*, and that for often infirmities. It was not to be used as a beverage but as a medicine. Have we this same right? Yes, but only under the same conditions—for our *often infirmities*.

However, we are commanded to flee from temptation; and if we have a desire or appetite for wine or any such stimulant, and the tasting of it would be likely to cause further indulgence, we will be governed by truth and not even taste it, although beset by often infirmities. Many die a drunkard's terrible death because they fail to heed the warning of Prov. 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Also the admonition in I Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Please explain Ephesians 4:26. Is it possible to be angry and not sin?

The Divine sentence concerning anger is clearly stated in these testimonies, Ps. 37:8, 9; Eccl. 7:9; Matt. 5:22; Col. 3:8. The Word of God does not forbid the works of sin in one place and allow them in another. The expression, "Be ye angry, and sin not" is understood correctly as an interrogation. Paraphrasing it, Paul really asked: Do you think you can get angry and not sin? It is very evident you cannot, for the latter part of the verse says, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Another translation reads: "Do not go to sleep feeling angry." Get rid of it quickly if you should offend in this point. He clinches his argument in verse 31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, . . . be put away from you, with all malice."

Explain Matthew 27:50—53.

This reads in the A.V.: "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

We believe this to have been literally true. These "saints" must have been individuals acquainted with Jesus and known to the generation living in Jerusalem. They were raised to bear witness in a striking manner to the resurrection of Jesus.

We prefer the reading of Goodspeed's translation as more intelligible: ". . . and many of the saints who had fallen asleep rose . . . and after his resurrection went into the holy city" etc. The "rising" would be at the crucifixion and death of the Master, as Matthew places it, in order to be witnesses of these events.

John 12:31 reads: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Does this apply to our times or to the future?

We know it could not apply in its entirety to any period of man's rule, for the "prince of this world," the power of evil, will never be cast out until Jesus comes the

second time. A better translation is found in the Twentieth Century New Testament: "This world is now on its trial. The Spirit that rules it will now be driven out." The day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2) is the period of trial for both the world and the faithful. The world fail their test, as the world of Jesus' day failed to grasp its great opportunity when it rejected its King; the faithful pass theirs and receive their reward when the kings and rulers of the present order are dethroned (Ps. 149:5—9), the devil (all evil) bound (Rev. 20:1), and the rightful King is exalted to power (Ps. 37:34).

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Christ is now present and will never be seen in His bodily form. I know this is false. Can you help me with direct Scriptural evidence to disprove this?

Concerning His second coming Jesus warned: "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:4, also verses 23—26). His coming will be as plain as the lightning which shines from east to west (v. 27). The most skeptical persons would see such a sign and have to acknowledge it is true.

At Jesus' ascension angelic messengers told the disciples that Jesus would return in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven (Acts 1:10, 11). In Rev. 1:7 we are told that when He comes, "every eye shall see him." Among the numerous testimonies that can be cited, perhaps the most striking is I John 3:2, "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; *for we shall see him as he is.*" This in no way suggests His being invisible.

Jesus was born to be King, to reign on the throne of David, and His Kingdom is to fill the whole earth. To deny His visible future reign and presence is to reject the plainest Scriptural teaching. Would not Jesus say of this class, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind"? The result—"both shall fall into the ditch."

What are the five, two, and one talents of Matthew 25:15?

The "talent" as used in the Bible refers to a unit of money and also of weight. The similarity of our word "talent," meaning a natural endowment or gift, is purely incidental, but in this case it is a happy parallel, for the passage refers to the dissimilarities of our natural gifts and abilities. The lesson is that, be our ability great or small, it is required of us that we do our very best with what we have, and more than this can no man do. Where much is given, much is required; but the minimum requirement for salvation is complete self-mastery, or perfection of character.

What is meant by "absent from the body and present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8)?

In the first part of this chapter, the Apostle is contrasting the frailty of his mortal body with the glories of the immortal state which he sought. Knowing that both mortality and immortality cannot exist in the body at the same time (v. 6; I Cor. 15:53, 54), he longed, as do we all, for deliverance from mortality and the change to incorruptibility at the Judgment.

But he did not expect this change at death; he firmly expected to wait in the grave until the Resurrection at the appearing of Jesus Christ from heaven (II Tim. 4:7, 8); for only then can any mortal hope to be "present with the Lord."

WHEN ZION BECKONS

Why linger longer on the plain, when Zion beckons you?
Why put off till tomorrow all the things you have to do?
Tomorrow you may be too late—this is Salvation's day,
And can you sit in idleness, while moments speed away?
That wondrous day, so long foretold, is surely drawing nigh,
When Christ, the King eternal, will descend the azure sky;
And only those found ready, with all evil cast aside,
Shall hear the joyful greeting, "Welcome, come, with me abide."

The sins that now beset us we must quickly overcome,
And, laying off each clinging weight, the race with fleetness run;
Enduring hardships as we go, though they be few and light
Compared with those the saints endured before the long, dark night.
The thirteen evils of St. Mark must all be cast aside,
The anger, hate, and jealousy, the stubbornness and pride.
The roots of bitterness must be dug up, and then destroyed,
And by those petty trials we must cease to be annoyed.

We must be thoughtful of our brother's welfare, even though
Rebukes are necessary in assisting him to grow.
Then courage must be added, till with spirit firm, but kind,
We tell him that the sins of youth must all be left behind.
And patience must be practiced in the daily scenes of life,
To aid us in eliminating bickerings and strife;
For we must be at peace with man, and with our God, as well,
If we would gain His favor now, and in the Kingdom dwell.

We should do unto others as we'd like to have them do,
Forgiving and forbearing; and to every trust be true.
We must avoid temptation, as we would a viper's sting,
And by each pitfall build a wall (a necessary thing).
By word, and by example we must hold aloft the Light,
That those around may see in us His image shining bright,
And some, perchance, be caused, in time, to turn and glorify
The God and Father we adore, who dwelleth there on high.

In checking the requirements that the Father has laid down
To each successful candidate for an eternal crown,
We find that there are many, as we count them one by one,
And they are ill-assured who listen to the chanted "done."
The work that lies unfinished, though it be by you or me,
When Jesus comes in power to usher in eternity,
Will then be charged against us, when too late to pay the bill:
Now is the time to do the work, while Zion beckons still.

If you would climb perfection's hill there is no time to waste,
Behold, the sun is setting, and there is great need for haste;
So do not look behind you at the sad destruction there,
But press to gain the summit, and the joys of Zion share.
The City now is beckoning; in just a few more days
The groanings of this warfare shall be changed to songs of praise,
For those enduring to the end—their longing eyes shall see
Their cherished hopes fulfilled, the dawning of Eternity.

—L. L. S.